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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND BOTANICAL TRAVELS OF ANDRÉ MICHAUX, BY DELEUZE.\*

WE are indebted for the greater part of the vegetable productions which enrich our fields and gardens to efforts of industry. Our garden vegetables and fruits are the natives of various countries, and in their natural state were very inferior to what we see them in our cultivated lands. Indefatigable researches have successively discovered them in their native soil; and after being imported and improved by culture, commerce has spread them from one country to another. After various experiments, choice has been made of the kinds that are most productive, or most suitable to the climate into which they were introduced; and many districts, where the inhabitants could scarcely find food in former times, now present abundant harvests to a numerous population.

Of about two hundred and fifty kinds of trees, which are at present found in France, more than three-fourths are natives of foreign soils. Among those exotics many afford delicious fruits; many are employed in building and the other useful arts; and others serve to ornament our parks and gardens, and present us with the picturesque views of the most favoured countries of the globe. The walnut-tree comes from Pontus; the cherry from Cerasonte; the olive from Athens; the almond tree from the east; the peach from Persia; the mulberry from China; the fig from Syria; the apricot from Armenia; the pomegranate from Carthage; and the orange from India. It is the same with our herbaceous plants. It is unknown from what country corn was originally derived; but many of our best culinary and agricultural vegetables are natives of Asia. The discovery of America has furnished us with maize,

which constitutes the principal nourishment of various parts of our continent; and the potatoe, which has augmented the population of Ireland and Switzerland, and in the north of Europe is a resource of such great importance to the nourishment of man; together with a prodigious number of useful trees, such as the acacia, the tulip-tree, several firs, the ash, the maple, &c.

This part of our wealth may still be greatly increased; but we must not rely, for all the advantage of this kind that may be acquired, on the efforts of traders, who bring only such trees or vegetables as the meet with on the coasts, and in the ordinary pursuits of their commerce. To derive all the benefit which this inexhaustible wealth offers, we must have men of study and science, who will penetrate into the interior of the countries they visit, and can distinguish the productions that are most useful.

We have pursued these reflections to demonstrate how much we owe to those courageous men, who, for the service of civilized society, have renounced all its enjoyments to search for the undiscovered treasures of nature in savage or uninhabited countries. Nor are these reflections foreign to our present subject: he of whose life we are about to give some account, well deserves to be placed among the benefactors of the human race. In tracing the picture of his laborious life, we shall see that the most ardent passion for the sciences, and above all for that of agriculture, united to the most constant love for his country, inspired him with the noblest plans, and endowed him for their execution with that intrepidity which braved dangers, and that strength and vigour which resist fatigue and surmount obstacles.

André Michaux was born at Satory, a royal domain, situated in the park of Versailles, on the 7th of March, 1746. When ten years old he was

\* *Annales du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle*, xvme cahier.

sent to a boarding-school with his younger brother, but neither of them remained there more than four years. Their father, whose intention it was that they should succeed him in the management of the farm at Satory, of which he had the care, deeming it unnecessary that they should pursue their studies further, sent for them home, and applied himself to the giving them an early habit of rural labours, and an early relish for the simplicity of that way of life.

The young André, whom nature had endowed with an extraordinary activity of disposition, soon acquired the most decided taste for agriculture. He closely examined the various vegetable productions within his reach; carefully explored the gardens; made incessant experiments; and, ambitious of uniting theory with practice, gave all his leisure time to the study of the principles of his art.

He lost his father in 1765, and his mother in 1766. Being now the depositary of the fortunes of his sisters, he divided the care of the farm with his brother till the year 1769, when they separated their concerns and pursuits. During this interval he had studied the elements of the Greek language, and improved himself in the Latin tongue.

In October 1769 he married Cecilia Claye, daughter of a rich farmer of Beauce, who died in September the following year, after having borne him a son. This loss plunged Michaux in the deepest despair. M. le Monnier, being informed of the circumstance, conceived the most tender interest in his concerns, frequently inviting Michaux to visit him at his garden of Montreuil, near Versailles. This celebrated man, in such high repute at court, solaced his leisure hours in conversation with Michaux, whose melancholy he laboured to subdue by engaging him in the study of botany, and of the principles of naturalizing foreign vegetable productions. The farm of Satory consisted of five hundred acres, and le Monnier advised Michaux to dedicate a portion of it wholly to experiments; which plan was adopted: he sowed madder and rice (*ris nu*) that perfectly succeeded. M. le monnier then intro-

duced him to M. d'Angiviller, who engaged him to make trials of the culture of the tef of Abyssinia, an excellent pasture grass, of which Bruce had furnished the seed. The manner in which he executed this commission added much to the favourable idea that had been entertained of him.

He continued, notwithstanding these labours, to be still a prey to his grief, the remembrance of the beloved object he had lost being incessantly recalled by every scene around him. A passion for travelling, which he had entertained from his earliest years, was naturally increased by this state of mind. I remember to have heard him say, that having construed Quæmus Curtius when he was fourteen, that author's descriptions of the countries conquered by Alexander so inflamed his imagination, that from that period he had almost constantly sighed for the happiness of travelling over the eastern world.

This strong impression was never afterwards destroyed by his advancement in years: it was merely subjected to the calm examination of reason, whence it was no longer a vague desire of exploring new countries. In quitting an abode become too painful to him, he entertained the honourable ambition of rendering services to his country. To this end he formed the resolution to travel into countries little known, situated in a climate analogous to that of France, to collect their productions, and naturalize them in his native soil. Perceiving, however, with an ingenious feeling, that he had not yet attained sufficient knowledge to travel with the utmost prospect of success in his scheme, he resigned his farm in favour of his brother, and gave himself up to study with renewed ardour.

In 1777 he established himself at Trianon, to study botany under Bernard de Jussieu, to whom M. le Monnier had recommended him; and in 1779 he removed to Paris, and took a lodging in the neighbourhood of the *Jardin des Plantes*, to improve himself in the knowledge of various parts of natural history.

These studies being finished, his next idea was, that the profession of one whose travels in the prosecution

of any great object of science, required, like every other profession, a particular apprenticeship, and that it would be profitable still further to practise the science in countries where important aids were to be obtained, previous to the penetrating into countries unknown or uncultivated. He therefore first visited England. The English at that time were almost the exclusive cultivators of exotic plants and trees. Michaux was enraptured at the sight of their collections, and on his return to France, brought with him a great number of trees, which he planted in the gardens of M. le Monnier, and the Marshal de Noailles, where they perfectly succeeded. Frequently also he took from these gardens a bundle of cyons, and traversing the woods of Versailles engrafted a number of trees, using a method that was peculiar to himself.

In 1780 he made an excursion on the mountains of Auvergne, with several botanists, among whom were M. de la Marck, and M. Thouin, by whom we have been informed, that as soon as they had quitted the place in which they had passed the night, Michaux, armed with a fowling-piece; and carrying a haversack, a port-folio, and several tin boxes, always advanced before them, rapidly climbing the mountains. He carried in his pocket seeds of the cedar of Lebanon, which he sowed in places favourable to its growth. He was frequently seen at a distance, halting and conversing with the shepherds; was now and then heard to discharge his gun; and in the evening he was found in the place of rendezvous, laden not only with a collection of plants, but with buds, minerals, and insects.

Soon after his return from the mountains of Auvergne, he proceeded to traverse the Pyrenees, and passed into Spain, from which tour he returned with seeds, that were distributed to different gardens, and experimental botanists.

He then addressed himself to M. le Monnier, requesting him to obtain a commission for him to travel into countries where he might find new objects of his science. This gentleman readily promised him to seize the first opportunity, which soon present-

ed itself. M. Rousseau, a native of Espahan, and nephew of the celebrated Rousseau of Geneva, arrived at Paris, having been recently appointed consul of Persia: Michaux was pitched upon to accompany him; and Monsieur, the king's brother, assigned him a pension of 1200 livres. Our traveller made no complaint of the insufficiency of the sum: he fitted himself out at his own expense, and departed with the consul in 1782. They proceeded first to Aleppo,\* and thence to Bagdad,

\* I here add an extract of a letter from Michaux to M. Thouin, which appears to me sufficiently interesting to be preserved.

*Aleppo, July 30, 1782.*

MY DEAR SIR,

"I landed at Alexandretta on the 30th of March. I cannot express to you the delight with which I run over the country here. In examining the multitude of plants with which the fields abound, I was often transported beyond myself, and compelled to pause and tranquilize my mind for some moments. At night I could not sleep, but watched the dawn of day with impatience. What happiness to find myself in Asia, and at my pleasure to traverse the mountains and valleys covered with lihaceous plants, orchidæ, daphnes, laurus, vitices, myrtles, andiacines, stylax, palms, and other vegetable productions, different from those of Europe. The sea-shore abounded with shell-fish, varied in form and colour: land and sea buds came every morning to feed upon them. The flamingos came in flocks of three or four hundred each. The marshes abound with reptiles. Unfortunately the greater part of the plants were not yet in flower, and the mountains were infested by the Bayas, who the preceding year had pillaged the caravan of Alexandretta, and a few days before our landing had put to flight the troops sent to guard the town, and had burnt several of the houses.

"Since my arrival at Aleppo, I have made two tours among the mountains. The town is situated on the side of a valley, in which are gardens abounding with tree, none of which are grafted; the rest of the country is dry, stony, and uncultivated. For six leagues round, not a single tree or shrub is to be seen. Beyond are vast plains, whose fertility, if cultivated, would be prodigious. On these were formerly villages, which have been successively destroyed. The predecessor of the present Pacha destroyed

where they arrived after a journey of forty days across the desert. At Bagdad Michaux quitted the consul. He traversed those countries, formerly so flourishing, at present so devastated, which are situated between the Tigris and the Euphrates, to proceed to Bassora, where he remained for some months to acquire information respecting the country, and to perfect himself in the Persian language, of which he compiled a dictionary that forms a large volume, now before me.

Persia was at that time a prey to civil wars, and the Arabs laid waste

more than eighty, on the pretext that the inhabitants had formerly revolted. His soldiers committed unheard of cruelties among them. They ransacked the houses, and cut off the heads of women and children, to make themselves masters of the pieces of gold which ornamented their head-dresses. It is by such vexations that the Pachas indemnify themselves for the tributes they pay to the grand seignior. These ruined villages are at present the haunts of robbers.

"Excursions are equally painful and dangerous throughout the whole of this part of Asia, which extends from Syria to the frontiers of India. The traveller carries his provisions, and sleeps on the ground, avoiding the caravanseras on account of their filthiness, and the insects with which they abound. He must, however, follow the caravans; otherwise he would be plundered by the Arabs on the plains, and the Curdes who infest the mountains. The caravans are often attacked: in March last, the robbers took from Alexandretta, 380 camels; and the one which is now ready to depart, has been compelled to wait ten days beyond their time, expecting troops which the Pacha of Aleppo and Antioch has detached for their escort. Every traveller must take with him an Armenian, with whom he must watch alternately; for the conductors of the caravans are for the most part knaves, who watch an opportunity secretly to rob the traveller.

"While I am waiting for our departure from Bagdad, which will not take place in less than a month, I purpose to make a botanical excursion over 150 leagues. I shall pass by Laodicea, Antioch, and Seleucia: I hope to find medals in this last city. At my return I shall send you and M. de Malesherbes some specimens of seed. The consuls and merchants can tell you that no one labours with more ardour to make his fortune, than I do for the interests of botany."

the frontiers. Michaux endeavoured to enter by Busheer, a port of the Persian gulf; but he was taken and plundered by the Arabs, who left him nothing but his books. Stript of all that he possessed, and without resources, he was at a loss to what quarter he should turn himself, when he was claimed by Mr. la Touche, the English consul at Bassora. Although peace was not yet concluded between England and France, Mr. la Touche justly thought that a naturalist who travelled for the benefit of mankind, ought to be protected by every nation; and he generously furnished him with the means of pursuing his journey. Michaux succeeded in an attempt to gain Shiras, whence, after remaining some time, he proceeded to Isbahan. From Isbahan, exploring mountains and deserts, he employed two years in traversing Persia, from the Indian sea to the Caspian. In this expedition, he found that the provinces situated between the thirty-fifth, and the forty-fifth degrees of latitude, are the native countries of the greater part of the trees that enrich our fields and gardens. The walnut, the cherry-tree, the vine, the spelt, lucerne, sainfoin, the chick pea, onions, lilies, tulips, &c. grow naturally in those countries. He also acquired information on the culture of the date; and established a very curious fact, already mentioned by Kämpfer, which is, that the male flowers of the date, although kept a year, are still proper to fecundate the female.\*

Although botany was his principal object, he did not neglect whatever might be interesting to the other branches of science. We are indebted to him for a very curious monument in perfect preservation, found at one day's journey below Bagdad, among the ruins of a palace known by the name of the garden of Semiramis, near the Tigris, which is now in the cabinet of antiquities in the national library. It is a stone in the form of a pear, a little flattened on two sides, a foot and a half in height,

\* See a memoir of Michaux, read at the National Institute on the 6th of Floreal, in the 7th year, and printed in the *Journal de Physique, Floreal, an ix.*

and a foot broad, weighing 44 pounds. It is ornamented with carving on the two flat sides: on the upper part are various symbolic figures, and below is a long inscription on two spaces, one of twenty-five, and the other of twenty-six lines. The illustration of this monument, which M. Millin published in his *Monumens Antiques*, vol. 1. p. 58, has given rise to much discussion, but we are still confined to conjectures on this subject.

It is difficult to conceive how Michaux could effect so many important objects, with such feeble means, in a country disturbed by war, infested by hordes of robbers, where it was necessary to travel constantly armed, frequently to join the caravans, in order to proceed from one country to another, sometimes to fly before the robbers, and at others to put them to flight by a vigorous resistance.

His character is peculiarly displayed in the notes of his journal. Relating a voyage which he made in a boat on the Tigris, he laments that he was not able, while the boat lay to during a few hours, on some occasion, to botanize on the neighbouring shore. "The Arabs," says he, "had taken away my shoes, and the soil was so scorching that it was impossible to place my feet except where the water covered the shore." In speaking of his circumstances, the only loss with which he appealed to be affected, was that of a favourable opportunity of pursuing his researches.

Michaux returned to Paris in the month of June 1785, bringing with him a magnificent collection of plants and seeds. We are indebted to this expedition for many vegetables at present successfully cultivated in the gardens of the amateurs, such as *Rosa simplicifolia*, *Zoegae leptandra*, *Michauxia campanulata*,\* &c. He was received by men of science with peculiar distinction, who alone were

capable of appreciating the merit of a man who sought not to display his own admirable qualities. They thought that the services which he had rendered the country, and the sacrifices which he had made, merited a national recompense; but Michaux demanded only to be sent on a new journey. He wished to return to Asia to visit the countries on the east of the Caspian sea, and afterwards to proceed to Thibet and the kingdom of Cashmere, whose productions are little known, and where there exist objects of commerce and manufactures which he was desirous of introducing into France. His solicitations were fruitless: yet the government, anxious to enrich France with various trees which grow in North America, selected him for this commission, and he departed on the 1st of September 1785.

He was charged in his instructions to proceed through the United States, for the purpose of collecting seeds, trees, shrubs and plants, and to establish a magazine for them in the neighbourhood of New York, whence they were to be sent from time to time to France. The park of Rambouillet was destined to receive them; it being the design of government to make one large central collection, whence the trees, &c. might be distributed. He was enjoined not to send them to any other quarter, with the exception of two packages, allowed to be sent annually, to M. le Monnier, and two to the *Jardin des Plantes*. He was also instructed to send game from America, which might be naturalized in plantations of trees, natives of their own country.

Michaux arrived at New York in 1785, in which city he fixed his principal residence during nearly two years, and established a garden in the neighbourhood. During this time he traversed New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland; and in the first year sent twelve parcels of seeds, five thousand trees, and several Canada partridges, which multiplied greatly at Versailles.

In September 1787, Michaux departed for Carolina. Regarding Charlestown as a central point, from

\* It was M. P. Heister, who, in publishing the figure and description of this genus, has consecrated it to the memory of M. Michaux. The name of *Michauxia* has been adopted by Messrs. Aiton, La Marck, and Ventenat; and M. de Jussieu proposes to adopt it also in the new edition of his *Genera Plantarum*.

which he might make his southern and northern expeditions, and visit the chain of the Allegany mountains, he resolved to make that city his principal residence; and accordingly purchased a piece of ground, three leagues from the town, destined to be a nursery for the seeds and young plants collected in his excursions, intending to send to France such only as should thrive well, and were therefore preferable to those found in the woods. Whilst he made his excursions into the country, he left his son at Charlestown to superintend the culture of his nursery. He paid such attention to the art of packing to the best advantage, that he sent to France, in one case, several hundred trees, which arrived in perfect health, and in the utmost freshness. Every package was accompanied by instructions respecting the culture proper to each species of tree, and the various uses to which it was adapted. The correspondence on this subject was between him and the Abbé Notin, director of the plantations.

In the month of April he departed on an excursion to examine the country near the sources of the Savannah, where he discovered *Magnolia auriculata*, *Azalea coccinea*, a new *Kalmia*, *Rhododendrum minus*, *Robinia viscosa*, various oaks, and several trees which, though not unknown to the botanists, had not yet been cultivated in our gardens.

Michaux, encouraged by these discoveries, resolved to extend his excursions to the very summit of the Allegany mountains. He therefore formed connections of friendship with the Indians, among whom he chose new guides, paying them part of their wages in advance, and promising them further gratuities on their return. Thus prepared, he ascended with his guides the rivers that fall into the Savannah.

In these uninhabited countries the forests are almost impenetrable, there being no other tracks than those formed by the bears. The bed of the torrents is the only route that can be followed: these must often be forded, or traversed on the trunk of a tree thrown across. On the banks

the traveller meets in some places with marshes in which he may sink, in others with thorny spreading plants: for sustenance there is nothing but the uncertain produce of the chase, or some harsh fruit accidentally met with. Michaux had lost two of his horses, and the third he reserved to carry his collection; and had he been even furnished with provisions, the savages had not sufficient command of themselves to manage the stock with prudence. In their honesty he placed much confidence, of which he had never reason to repent; but he was often annoyed by their want of tractability. It was absolutely necessary not to lose sight of them; and he was even sometimes compelled to run, that he might not be separated from them. "In the end he acquired all their boldness. Of all the Europeans they had known, they avowed that he had the most sense. 'The people of your country,' they would say, 'are very ignorant: they do not know how to live in a forest; and, if they lose themselves in it, cannot find their way out.'

When Michaux found a spot suitable to his purpose, he cut down the branches of trees, and constructed a little cabin, whence he made excursions in the neighbourhood; returning at night to his shelter, where he deposited the selections of the day. His Indians every morning proceeded to the chase, and returned in the evening to kindle their fire, and cook their game. It deserves to be noticed here, that they did not roast, but boiled all their animal food: it is more agreeable to the palate roasted; but when it is to be eaten without vegetables, after a few days it inflames the blood.

I will not here describe the dangers which our traveller incurred in these solitudes, where he was incessantly engaged in climbing rocks, or passing torrents; often upon the rotten trunks of trees, which crumbled beneath his feet; where a frightful darkness rests over the wilds, produced by the thickness of the branches interwoven with climbing plants, and still more by almost continual fogs, which cover these rugged mountains.

Michaux had found a new species of *Pavia*, of *Clethra*, of *Azalea*, of *Rhododendrum*; and thus animated by an enthusiastic love of his science, he did not even think of fatigue. Being arrived at the sources of the river Tennesse, on the other side of the mountains, he found a delightful plain of about a mile in extent, covered with delicious straw-berries, of which he collected roots that have perfectly succeeded in France.

This was the extremity of his present excursion. He returned to Charlestown, where he arrived on the sixth of July, after having travelled

three hundred leagues across Carolina and Georgia. It was in the south of this latter province that he gathered a species allied to cinchona, which is used by the inhabitants of the country as a cure for fevers, and which with us may probably be very serviceable in medicine. This tree, which he has distinguished by the name of *Pinckneya pubens*, is hardy enough to bear the winters of our southern departments. It is at present cultivated in the garden of M. Cels, and in that of the Museum.

*To be Continued.*

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### DETACHED ANECDOTES.

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#### VIRTUOUS SINGULARITY IN OPPOSITION TO PRIVATEERING.

**D**URING the American war, the Amazon privateer was fitted out by the merchants of Belfast on a joint subscription. One respectable merchant who had spent the early part of his life at sea as the captain of a trading vessel refused to join, but lent fifty pounds, the amount of a share, to the poor house to support the cotton manufacture, then carrying on, in its infancy, for the benefit of that institution. Such virtuous opposition to the general current is deserving of being preserved as a proper example, and as a distinguished mark of disapprobation against the vicious and anticommercial spirit of privateering.

Dr. Franklin recommended to the Americans to offer in all their treaties, that in case of future hostilities between them and any nation no countenance should be given by either parties to privateering. The article was only accepted by the Prussians, who were not much engaged in maritime pursuits. K.

#### MODESTY IN AUTHORS.

Herodotus writing of the voyage of a Phœnician vessel, which Nechos, king of Egypt, dispatched by the Red Sea, and which three years afterwards returned by the Mediterranean, says, 'The Phœnicians related on their return that in sailing round Lybia,

they had the sun on their right: this story seemed to me by no means credible, but it perhaps may be believed by others." Later discoveries by a more accurate knowledge of the position of the earth have proved that the act of which Herodotus doubted, really happened, but we have here an instance of his commendable modesty. Ancient historians and geographers, who were more presumptuous, as Strabo for example, have upon their imperfect knowledge, decided that the story was false. Such error is a useful warning to avoid pronouncing judgment from the dictates of prejudice, and with imperfect information. Many assume a habit of dogmatical assertion, to which they require implicit credit. They would frequently prove their prudence if not their wisdom, by exhibiting less positiveness and a greater willingness to doubt of their own infallibility. Many authors act like the French lady of whom Dr. Franklin tells, who in a little dispute with her sister very naturally exclaimed, "I do not know how it happens, sister, but I meet with nobody but myself that is always in the right."

#### FORTITUDE IN MEETING DEATH ACQUIRED BY FORCE OF EXAMPLE IN A MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

The ancient Scandinavians, or inhabitants of Denmark and Sweden,